

CULTURAL CROSSROADS

A PUBLICATION OF THE MAYOR'S MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ■ CITY OF LINCOLN, NEBRASKA ■ SPRING 2004

NEW FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Explore the many corners and colors of the world at the "Celebrate Lincoln" ethnic festival, produced by Updowntowners. On Friday, April 30 and Saturday, May 1, the 12th Street corridor between "N" and "O" streets will be transformed into a bustling world market. Hours are 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturday.

Festival guests will enjoy a vibrant array of unique handiwork from local artisans, performing arts and dance, live global music and fresh, homemade foods from around the world. The festival's goal is to build community harmony through interaction, education and celebration.

"Lincoln is fortunate to be growing in diversity, and we are proud to be the home of people from all over the world," said Mayor Coleen Seng. "Through 'Celebrate Lincoln', we have the opportunity to learn more about our neighbors, which is the first step toward sharing, communication and friendship."

"Lincoln Benefit Life is proud to be the presenting sponsor of 'Celebrate Lincoln'," said Gene Wraith, president of Lincoln



Celebrate Lincoln

Ethnic Festival
April 30-May 1, 2004

Benefit Life. "This valuable community opportunity is a strong fit within our 'Tolerance, Inclusion and Diversity' corporate giving focus area. We know community members will embrace this celebration and learn more about each other."

Wells Fargo and Southeast Community College are also sponsoring partners. Admission to the festival is free, but donations are encouraged to help cover expenses.

There will be a main stage at 12th and "N" streets and a dance floor inside Energy Square.

The featured entertainment on the main stage Friday night is The Elders playing Celtic music. Saturday night, Ashanti will perform African music on the main stage. Other main stage acts Friday and Saturday will include Grupo Folklorico, the Athenian

Dancers, the Standing Eagle Drummers, the Lincoln Irish Dancers and Kusi Taki. The Energy Square activities on Saturday will include belly dancing, folk music, a Chinese classical music ensemble, Ballet Folklorico Sabor Mexicano and Mexican dance lessons.

The types of food being offered will include Afghan, African, Chinese, Czech, Ethiopian, German, Greek, Iraqi, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, Native American, South American, Turkish, Russian and Vietnamese.

A "Celebrate Lincoln" passport will be distributed to Lincoln's elementary schools. Children are to draw a picture of themselves or paste in a school picture and then bring their passports to the festival to complete. As children attend the event, they can have their passport stamped at the various booths they visit. Once completed, the passport can be redeemed for a free Slushie and pencil from Runza Restaurants. Names will be entered in a prize drawing sponsored by Pepsi. Passports will also be available at the entrances to the festival.

For more information or to volunteer for the event, contact Updowntowners at www.updowntowners.org or (402) 434-6902.

Making a Commitment to Diversity

Four years ago as we entered a new millennium, Community Peacemakers of Lincoln suggested that citizens commit themselves to taking action to expand our knowledge of and exposure to diversity in our community. The need is still there to continue making diversity an integral part of who we are and what we do, individually and collectively. Here are some suggestions:

- Be aware of and attend a community event sponsored by local cultural centers.
- Volunteer at a local cultural center.
- Attend a religious service at a place of worship where the congregation is predominantly of an ethnic or racial group other than your own.

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Scholarships Available to Cornhusker State Games Athletes



Nebraska's Amateur Sports Festival

The Nebraska Sports Council and The Gallup Organization will award five scholarships of \$1,000 each to athletes competing in the 2004 Cornhusker State Games this summer. Any high school

graduate, including the class of 2004, who participates in the Games is eligible to apply. The scholarships will be available for the fall semester of the 2004-2005 academic year at any Nebraska post-secondary educational institution. Winners will be announced at the Cornhusker State Games Family Fest Saturday, July 17.

Application forms are available by contacting the Cornhusker State Games office, 2202 South 11th in Lincoln. The phone number is (402) 471-2544. The application and more information are also available on line at **cornhuskerstategames.com**.

In addition to the form, applicants must include transcripts from their high school or most recent post-secondary educational institution. Also required of each applicant is an essay, 200 words or less, on their educational objectives, career goals and what the scholarship would mean to them. Up to three letters of recommendation will be accepted.

The application, transcript, essay and any letters of recommendation must be postmarked by June 23 and sent to Cornhusker State Games, P.O. Box 82411, Lincoln, NE 68501.

This is the 20th anniversary of the Cornhusker State Games, a statewide amateur sports festival for all Nebraskans. Events are held the third week of July at more than 70 sites. The purpose of the Games is to provide top-quality, amateur competition in a wide range of activities and to promote physical fitness and personal health and well-being for Nebraskans of all ages and skill levels.

New Americans Folklore Initiative

At the outset of the New Americans Folklore Initiative, those involved with the project had no idea they would find such a rich diversity of traditional art forms among the community's immigrants and refugees. The Lincoln Arts Council is sponsoring the project to identify and celebrate the folk art traditions of new Americans in Lincoln.

The researchers, led by Nebraska author and educator Roger Welsch, include folklorist John Carter and VISTA member Carol DeVall. Their first step was to visit with administrators of Lincoln's ethnic centers, community organizations, schools and churches. Each meeting garnered other contacts and has led the team to performances, religious rites, holiday festivities and, ultimately, individual artists and performers. Team members have talked with dancers who don fabulous, colorful costumes for their performances; with musicians who have

brought rare, traditional instruments from their homelands; and with painters who were taught special techniques by their parents and grandparents.

After building an index of art forms, the researchers will begin devising ways to enable the folk artists to share their talents with the larger community. At the core of the New Americans Folklore Initiative is the determination to communicate to our newest citizens that, despite the demands they face daily in adapting to a new culture, the artistic traditions they have brought with them are valued in Lincoln and deserve to be preserved.

The project, which was announced in September 2003, is funded with a \$30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. *For further information about the project, contact Anne Pagel at the Lincoln Arts Council, (402) 570-1157 or (402)434-2787.*



Cesar Chavez Day



Oscar Rios and his parents lead the singing of "De Colores."

Mayor Seng proclaimed March 31, 2004 as "Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning" in Lincoln at a special event at the Mayor's office. In 1962, Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, the first union in U.S. history to win collective bargaining for farm workers. Speakers included Holly Burns, Executive Director of the Hispanic Community Center; Federico



Mayor Seng issues the proclamation.

Torres, Regional Director of the National Association of Farmworkers Multi-Cultural Human Development Corporation; and Chandra Diaz-Debose, Chair of the Hispanic Community Center Board. To close the program, the audience sang "De Colores," the anthem of the United Farm Workers of America led by Oscar Rios, Board Member of the Hispanic Community Center, and his parents from Mexico.

Congratulations To...



Leola Bullock and Mayor Seng.

■ Leola Bullock, honored as the Rotary Club's 17th annual Nebraskan of the Year in February. Mayor Seng also presented a key to the City to Bullock, who has served the community more than 50 years as a volunteer, advisor and promoter of fairness, justice and equality. Mayor Seng said Bullock "is a woman of integrity who stands as a shining role model for all of us in determining how we should conduct ourselves as members of a community."

■ Helen Fagan, keynote speaker at the annual Freedom Breakfast in January, who received a key to the City from Mayor Seng. Fagan spoke of her experiences as an Iranian in the U.S.

■ Winners of the \$500 Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships, announced at the Freedom Breakfast: Mohammed Abdulrahman, Lincoln Southeast; Thu-Hong Bui and Phillip Owens, Lincoln High; and Ashley Russell, Lincoln Northeast.

■ Winners of the UNL 2004 Chancellor's "Fulfilling the Dream" awards: Stephanie Adams, Assistant Professor of Industrial and Management Systems Engineering and interim Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at UNL; and Jose Soto, Vice President for Affirmative Action, Equity and Diversity at Southeast Community College.

■ Modesta Putla, new director of the Asian Community and Cultural Center, which was recently awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Building Strong Families Foundation.



Modesta Putla

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- Invite an acquaintance or co-worker of an ethnic or racial group other than your own to accompany you to social, cultural, civic or sporting event.
- Invite an acquaintance or co-worker of an ethnic or racial group other than your own to accompany you to lunch or dinner at your home or a local restaurant.
- Invite a friend of a different race, culture or ethnicity to your home for a social gathering.
- Write a letter to the editor in response to acts in the community you consider to be racist.
- Monitor public agencies, businesses and the media to ensure the inclusion and representation of diversity. Write a letter to civic, business and community leaders when diversity is limited or nonexistent.
- Promote and support local organizations that are working on eliminating prejudice and discrimination in the community.
- Read a book dealing with race. Suggest such a book to your book club. Work toward adding diversity to your book club.
- When appropriate, do not hesitate to challenge others when they make comments that you deem to reflect a level of intolerance for diversity.
- Avoid doing business with establishments that do not reflect a commitment to diversity, inclusion and fairness. Seek out and support businesses that demonstrate affirmative hiring practices.
- Encourage others to take individual action to improve race relations in the community.



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**Click on *City of Lincoln Departments*,
then *Mayor's Office*,
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**Mayor Coleen J. Seng's Office
441-7511**

Designed by Citizen Information Center

The mission of the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee is to identify and recommend policies and strategies that enhance and support the full and equal partnership of people of diverse racial, cultural, economic, gender and disabled communities in city government and Lincoln community affairs.

Editorial Policy

This is a publication of the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee of the City of Lincoln. Material appearing in this publication shall be in accordance with the purpose, goals and official positions of the committee.

Submissions by community groups and individuals are welcome and will be considered for publication based on the following criteria: the article's compliance with the goals and official positions of the committee; the article's relevancy to the designated theme of that quarter's newsletter; and the length of the article. Articles may be accepted as written, edited or declined for publication.

Responsibility for final decisions lies with the committee chair and newsletter editors. Inquiries about this publication may be directed to the Chair of the Mayor's Multicultural Committee, Amrita Mahapatra, or Vice-Chair, Amir Azimi.



***If you need translation assistance for
Cultural Crossroads, please call 474-3950
for referral information.***

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